

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-4, 15, 17, 19 and 21 and amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-4 (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) A method of separating target microorganisms from a suspension, comprising:

immersing a plurality of beads coated with at least one antibody material into the suspension, said beads being ~~held by~~ contained within the interior space of an enclosure ~~with~~ having a pore size smaller than the size of said beads and larger than the size of the microorganisms,

suspending the enclosure in the suspension thereby allowing the capture of the target microorganisms by said beads; and

washing said beads to remove organisms not bound to said beads, thereby separating target microorganisms from the suspension.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein at least one detergent is applied in said washing.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5 further comprising agitation of said enclosure holding said beads in the suspension.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the time period of agitation is at least 30 minutes.

9. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein the time period of agitation extends for several hours.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5 including the addition of at least one detergent to the suspension to decrease absorption of non-specifically bound cells.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5 including the subsequent step of immersing the enclosure and beads in new growth broth.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 including the addition of an indicator material to the new growth broth.

13. (Original) The method of claim 5 including the subsequent step of separating the beads from the enclosure followed by at least one test to reveal the microorganisms of interest.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5 wherein said enclosure further comprises means attached to the enclosure for moving the enclosure in the suspension and for subsequent removal of the enclosure from the suspension.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein said means attached to the enclosure for moving the enclosure in the suspension and for subsequent removal of the enclosure from the suspension is attached to an upper part of the enclosure.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5 wherein said enclosure is made of a grid material.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 wherein said enclosure holding said beads in the suspension is agitated with a rod or string attached to the enclosure.

21. (Canceled).

22. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein said enclosure is in the shape of a teabag.

23. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein said enclosure is cylindrical.